

# Still Flying

by Origamidragons

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Summary: A collection of oneshots in my Still Flying 'verse, a Firefly AU of Supernatural.

## 1. Chapter 1

The old Impala-class ship doesn't look like much, but she's a home. There's lots of things that make her so. Scrawled across the hull, in English and Chinese in messy grey spray paint, is her name. Baby. å•å•.

The black metal and silver detailing are faded and worn by now, but she's still shiny as the day she was made thanks to the captain's loving care. She's a one series, rolled off the line way back in 2467 and she's circled the 'verse twice since. She's got too many lightyears on her and her engine makes a thunking noise every now and then despite Charlie's best efforts, but she's home.

There's two sets of initials carved into her dashboard: DW and SW.

Once, she was just a home to two boys and their dad, an Independence vet who'd found a different war to fight, one fought in the shadows by rebels and pirates and smugglers. Then one of the boys left, ran off to a fancy Alliance school on Osiris and his daddy told him to stay gone and his brother managed to get him back but not quite fast enough.

Their dad is gone. Just dropped dead one day. Happens to the best of us, but it's okay because they found a better one in an old spaceship junker by the name of Bobby Singer on Dakota, out on the rim. And then Baby was just home to two boys, alone in the 'verse, for a mighty long time, until a former Alliance operative on the run came on as a passenger and never really left.

His name was Castiel then. Now it's Cas, and he's the pilot. He's

pretty good at flying, and Baby is his wings.

On Nebraska, there's a rundown old saloon called Harvelle's, and they've become family too.

Next, a brown-haired mercenary all big guns and sharp edges and a smile like a knife took the better offer and emptied her gun into her partner's skull and climbed aboard. Her name is Meg, and she stayed for a money for a long time until all of a sudden she was staying because it was home.

Dean's pretty sure she's got something with Cas, too.

There's a smarmy little gangster named Crowley who runs everything from a base on Persephone, the planet named for the queen of the Underworld. Dean finds it fitting. Crowley's their enemy twice as often as he's their friend, but sometimes he tosses them jobs when it suits him.

Then there was the most undignified Companion Dean had ever had the displeasure to meet, who rented out a shuttle and quickly become the obnoxious big brother to everyone on board and flirted with everyone. Gabriel had been threatened more than anyone with immediate departure via the airlock, but he paid well and gave them credibility so they were kinda stuck with him until they found out he was running just like the rest of them and Dean found that he didn't really mind anymore.

And then there was a weird little guy named Garth on a weird little ship called Fizzles' Folly for some fucking reason, and he became family too, somehow.

Next there was the smiling red-headed mechanic who was always spattered in engine grease and hugged you and then you were dirty too and you didn't even mind. She was a hostage, held by human monsters and forced to hunt down the Winchesters who hunted them first and when all was said and done she came aboard and \_shÃ©nshÃ©ng de gÇ'u shÇ• \_that is a cool ship.

And then Charlie had nowhere to go back to so she just sort of stayed and besides, the fuel rotor had been making funny noises lately and she got it up and running in ten minutes flat and okay, she can stay.

And then there was a little Asian genius kid who'd had secrets coded into his brain and the Alliance wanted them back and he stayed for protection until he wasn't wanted anymore, wasn't needed anymore, not as much and not as bad, but they took his mom and killed his girl and now Kevin's staying because it's home.

Then Dean was lost, spent months on a primitive jungle planet and fought every waking moment side by side with an old convict, a former addict, damned for life for what he'd done. And when Dean finally found the way off the godforsaken rock, Benny came with him.

Baby may not look like much, but she gave a home and a family to two boys who never thought they'd have either, and they've lost so much but they've still got what matters.

They're still flying.

## 2. Chapter 2

"Gonna have to take on passengers on Angel," Dean announced, maybe a bit too loudly but he was never quite sure if Sam had heard him or not, and because he tried to be as loud as possible whenever it was him and Sam because sneaking up on Sam, whether it was intentional or not, how been a bad idea even before his brain got all ripped up and put back together again.

After... well, Dean had only made that mistake once. However, Sam had been doing better lately, so his fingers were crossed.

"Mkay," Sam just said. He was hanging off of his bed upside down, looking perfectly comfortable and reading a book on some branch of science that Dean couldn't even pronounce.

"You gonna be alright with strangers on board?" he asked carefully, and Sam shot him a little smile.

"You'll take care of it," he said confidently. "If anything bad happens. You will."

Dean's heart swelled a little bit at Sam's words, and tried not to show it, even if it was useless because Sam always seem to know what he was thinking these days, and he seemed to this time too, because he grinned and muttered 'no chick-flick moments' under his breath and Dean rolled his eyes and wasn't fooling anyone.

"Bitch."

"Jerk."

~o~

Sam took refuge in his cabin when they landed on Angel, an insignificant planet in the eyes of the Alliance and therefore a breeding ground for crime and corruption. Criminals, thieves and gangsters were drawn to it like flies to rotting flesh. Their kind of people. Sam wasn't as good at being around large crowds of people if he could help it, now. He called it an overload, and while Dean didn't pretend to understand how his brother's brain worked Sam did, so if he said he couldn't handle something Dean fully believed him.

However, that did mean Dean was now stuck pawning off all the cargo, restocking on supplies, tracking down a new job, and picking up passengers. The last one, luckily, turned out to be the easiest, because when he came walking back up to Baby with his pockets a little heavier and the coordinates of an old wreck still stocked with goods in his mind, there was already someone standing there, a stranger with blue eyes that had seen too many miles and a dirty tan trench coat.

"Y'need something, stranger?" Dean asked in a friendly tone, one hand on the butt of the Colt that hung heavy on his hip.

"I'm looking for passage," the man said in a gravelly and emotionless

voice that sent uneasy chills down Dean's spine.

"Where to? We're headed to Jericho to do some business."

"That's fine," the man said immediately, and something clicked in Dean's mind. Someone on a planet like this, eager to get away but not caring where except away?

"You gonna bring the Alliance down on us?" he asked suspiciously.

The man looked thoughtful for a moment. "I have a marked interest in avoiding them, but I suspect you do too. I can pay," he stated, pulling a bag out of his pocket. Dean bounced it in his hand for a moment and its considerable weight convinced him.

"Alright," he said. "I'm Dean, and this lovely lady here is Baby. Welcome aboard."

"I am Castiel."

~O~

Sam didn't get to meet Castiel until dinner. Dean had laid out the rules for their passenger and shown him around, helped him take his belongings to his cabin, where he had stayed until the dinner bell rang. When Sam laid eyes on him, he stiffened for a fraction of a second, in such a way that no one who didn't know him as well as Dean did would even notice, but he did and he made a mental note to ask Sam later what he had seen and whether their passenger ought to leave the fast and cold way.

But, as he found out later, it wasn't what Sam had seen that was the problem. It was what he hadn't seen.

"I can't read him," Sam said, his voice very small and scared. "Dean, I can't read him. That's never happened before."

Dean frowned. "Well, you haven't tried much. There's probably folk just can't be read. I'll keep an eye on him, though. Two if I can spare them. Okay?"

Sam nodded yes, but from then on avoided their passenger as much as he could, which meant he was basically a ghost for the next week, until they stopped off at Constance to refuel and restock. This basically meant that Dean and Castiel got to enjoy each other's company a bit too much for that time, and that meant they got to talking as much as two men running from their pasts could, and that meant they became... well, not friends, but acquaintances, at least.

~O~

Cas (and at some point he had become Cas) wanted to stay on the ship, but Dean managed to get him to come off and go on the supply run with him, because honestly he was so sick and tired of doing it alone. It went well and they even got a discount on some overpriced protein bars thanks to Cas's awesomely intimidating death glare. He resolved to bring the guy along on these kinds of things more often before remembering he was getting off on Jericho.

And that was good. Yes.

On the way back to the ship, Dean was laughing and had even managed to coax a smile out of Cas's stony face only to be stopped abruptly as the other man suddenly drew up short, the box of protein falling out of his hands to be replaced by a four-sided silver blade that slid like liquid out of his sleeve. Dean's heart jumped into his throat because he'd seen too many corpses with those square holes in their backs.

People killed by Operatives. He was reaching for his gun and thinking \_shoulda spaced the son of a bitch when I had the chance, now he's gonna kill me and drag Sammy back to that hellhole stupid stupid stupid \_when it occurred to him, by degrees, that Cas wasn't pointing the blade at \_him. \_He wasn't even looking at him. His too-blue gaze was focused on another figure that had seemingly appeared out of nowhere, a tall bald man with dark skin and a menacing smirk holding a matching silver sword.

"Castiel!" the man called, his tones spiked with venom. "It's... \_good \_to see you again."

"What do you want, Uriel?" Cas asked with clenched teeth.

"Oh, I thought it was pretty clear. I want you to come come to Heaven with me, alive is a preference but not necessary if only so Michael can kill you himself. But who knows? Maybe he'll be merciful. After all, you did track down our wayward psychic."

"No!" Dean shouted, bringing his gun up and training it on the man-the Operative. "You people don't get to touch him \_ever again\_!"

Uriel gave a rich chuckle, deep in his throat, and barely flinched when Dean's shot perforated his shoulder.

"Ouch," he said. "Too bad, really. I was considering letting you live. But you'll never stop being a thorn in our side, will you?"

At some point, the majority of Uriel's attention had shifted over to Dean, and now as he hefted his silver sword and prepared to strike what would doubtless be a killing blow, Cas made his move. He lunged forward and Uriel's sword stopped Cas's an inch from his heart. Uriel bared his teeth in something that could be mistaken for a smile, at a distance, and slashed back, drawing a thin line of blood across Cas's cheek as the other barely jumped back in time to avoid losing half of his head.

Cas replied with a feint and a parry, a stab towards Uriel's gut that was deflected and returned in kind. They danced, moving faster than any normal man could move, silver blades flashing in the sun. Dean felt useless. He couldn't even get a shot off for fear of hurting Cas, and \_fuck, \_what was he thinking? The guy was an Operative.

Then a bullet entered perfectly through one side of Uriel's head and out the other, and as he slowly crumpled to the ground with a comically shocked expression frozen on his face, Sam, standing behind them with a gun in his hands, opened his eyes.

~O~

Dean wasn't sure what made him bring Cas back on board Baby, the same way he wasn't sure when Castiel had become Cas and Cas had become his friend, but he did, and if they ran afoul of an Alliance patrol on the way to Jericho and it was only Cas's fancy flying that got them out of it, well, that didn't hurt either.

Either way, Cas was flying the ship when they took off from Jericho.

### 3. Chapter 3

"CAS! Any time now would be great!" Dean shouted, his voice echoing over the speakers, and Cas immediately sent Baby into a steep dive. Dean and Meg were back-to-back with guns in their hands and furrowed brows, ringed by a circle of the gangsters they'd been robbing. Sam, he knew, was still inside, working his magic on the safe while Dean and Meg provided a distraction.

At least, that had been the idea. Now, it looked like the plan would have to be tweaked. This constant improvisation was something Cas still hadn't adjusted to, though he'd been getting better. As an Operative, jobs were always planned down to the last minute with no room for error, not that there ever was any. Because if you so much as doubted, you were gone.

And Cas had heard about the Stanford Academy program and he had doubted. A place where the brightest of the bright were snuffed out like so many candles, ripped apart and sewn back together over and over and over again.

'For the greater good,' his superior, Zachariah, had said with a sickly-sweet smile. 'Some have to suffer so we can bring peace to the universe. Don't you want paradise, Castiel?'

And Castiel had said 'yes' and what he meant was 'not like this' and he ran. He thought of his old superior, Anael, and how she had just disappeared one day. He wondered if she had found out what was happening and run too.

(Anael is Anna now, a red-headed church girl with no past and no future but as a farmer living quietly and peacefully on an out-of-the-way planet called Milton.)

He yanked the yoke up and pulled up just in time to avoid a messy collision with the ground, forcing the thugs to scatter as he touched down. Just as they broke formation, Sam (and he must have been watching, either with his eyes or with his mind) came sprinting out of the bolt hole with something small and shiny in his hands and all three of them leapt into the cargo bay as Cas lowered the door and he pulled back up before it was even closed.

Shots rang out behind them and metal music sounded as they bounced off Baby's hull. Cas was already anticipating the hours that Dean would spend looking for dents and holes. Sure enough, he could already hear the captain faintly complaining as the three battered smugglers stumbled up towards the bridge. Meg was laughing

breathlessly, and she took a gulp of some sort of alcohol and then offered him the bottle.

"Nice moves, flyboy," she said with the same teasing cynical sarcasm that imbued every word she said. "You're an angel."

Meg was fascinating to Cas, because she was his antithesis. Operatives didn't ask questions, didn't doubt, didn't see shades of grey. They followed orders because that was all they could do. Their lives didn't belong to them, but to the Alliance, who they served loyally until death and that was just how it was. In return, they lived in luxury, high above the normal citizens, with the best care and food and servants. They weren't allowed to have alcohol. Nothing that would compromise their performance.

But then there were people like Meg, like Dean, who lived in dirt and squalor on the edge of space and stole and killed for a living, who ran and ran from the Alliance and from their pasts every waking moment and drank too much and broke every law and were fiercely, painfully free, and at some point Cas had become one of them and now he wouldn't have it any other way.

He brought the bottle to his lips by the neck and drank, and it burned his throat on the way down.

#### 4. Chapter 4

The first time Bobby Singer saw those Winchester boys in some twenty-odd years, it was because they crashed their old clunker of theirs in his front yard. There was a smoldering hole through-and-through one of the Impala's engines, but as he would soon find out, that was the least of their worries, and beaten-up old ships were Bobby's specialty anyways.

No, that wasn't the problem. The problem was one Alliance Agent Tyson Brady, who was bound and gagged to one of the support struts in the cargo bay. Even through the gag, Bobby was certain the smug little bastard was wearing a condescending smirk.

"Fuck," he said, with feeling, on learning of this unfortunate fact as Dean explained the situation. The reason it was Dean and not Sam was that as soon as the younger Winchester had laid eyes on the \_go tsao de\_ bastard, he'd gone into some sort of trauma-related shock and was now passed out and shaking.

Nonetheless, Bobby helped Dean relocate the little worm to being tied to a chair inside his house, and helped drag Sam into the guest room, and then sat down on his couch with Dean to hear the story.

So, Dean said, what had happened was that they were running a simple job out to Salvation (but it was never just a simple job, was it, not with those boys) when they found out the Alliance was trying to recruit one of the kids there for the Stanford Project, a sweet little girl named Rosie. Dean had been all for staying out of the fight, but one shot of the puppy eyes from Sam and he caved like warm butter.

So they'd got to the little farm (newly weds, new baby girl, equipment so new it was still shiny in the literal sense- settlers,

not used to Rim life yet) and found the son of a bitch holding a gun on the little girl's mom and making a convincing argument why she should send Rosie with him.

Dean brought his gun down on the guy's head and he crumpled, but not before he saw Sam and his eyes turned almost black with some sort of nasty glee, and Sam promptly collapsed in seizing hysterics. Dean at this point couldn't leave the fucker because he'd seen Sam's face (so far as the Alliance knew Sam and Dean Winchester had been killed in a fire on the 'campus' of the Stanford Project and they'd like to keep it that way) and needed a place to lay low while Sam got better, so they legged it to Dakota.

"Huh," Bobby was all said when the story was over, though he was feeling a powerful strong desire to put bullets in the son of a bitch agent, see how smug he is then. "Why didn't you just kill him?"

"I thought about it. But I think he's got something to do with whatever the \_tÄ• mÄ• de\_ they did to Sam in that place," Dean admitted. "And I think some pain wight motivate him to telling us exactly what that was."

It took Bobby a moment. "You wanna torture a fed?" he exploded. "Son, you out of your gorram mind?!"

Dean just shrugged and smiled and looked at him expectantly, and Bobby hesitated before surrendering to the boy's more insane and suicidal tendencies before letting all his breath out in a long whoosh.

"You Winchesters are all crazy, y'know that?"

~O~

"He was my friend."

Dean's head jerked up and his hand went automatically to the old Colt at his side. He hadn't even heard a creak to suggest someone was coming- Sam moved like a ninja nowadays, but once he realized who it was he relaxed and his hand fell away.

"...what?" he asked, because in his shock he had completely missed whatever the first thing was that Sam had to say, and it was a testimony to how badly shaken Sam was that he couldn't even muster an eye-roll or a derisive snort at his big brother's idiocy.

"Brady," he elaborated, pointing towards the living room where their unconscious captive was still tied up. "We were... he was the one that... um."

Sometimes when Sammy was stressed his tongue tied himself in knots. To be fair, that wasn't one of the many side effects of the Alliance turning his brain into their own personal playground. He'd always been \_lÄ• shÇ•\_ at expressing himself.

"Spit it out, Sammy."

"He was the one that told me to go to Stanford!" Sam spat, voice filled with unfettered rage and betrayal, and Dean was infinitely glad it wasn't directed at him, before collapsing into the nearest



available armchair (a ratty old number that smelled like mothballs and that Dean swore was old enough to be an Earth-That-Was artifact) like a puppet with cut strings.

Sam giggled a little hysterically and buried his face in his hands, muffling his voice. "Met him on a planet, little one, don't even remember what it was called, space is needed for more important tasks. You and Dad were pawning some salvage goods and he bought me a beer and asked what had be down and I told him. He said I deserved something better. That's what he said. I told him Dad was doing the best he could and he said, well then he should do the best of someone better. Then he handed me a pamphlet. Stanford. Best law programs in the 'verse."

Sam's voice was coming faintly through his fingers and he started to sway a little bit again, so Deam helped him back to the guest room before he could knock out right in the middle of Bobby's living room.

~O~

"You can't fix your brother," the slimy little fuck sneered as Dean dug the knife into his side before his face twisted into a howl of pain and he let loose an impressive string of Mandarin profanities.

"I know," Dean said simply, and that seemed to strike the agent dumb for a while, because he stared for a moment and was about to open his mouth again when Dean continued. "He's not broken."

~O~

**\*\*Chinese:\*\***

Go tsao de - Dog fucking

Ta ma de - Fuck

Lǎ• shǐ• - Shit

## 5. Chapter 5

Meg didn't remember her family. There were flashes, time to time, a gentle touch, a warm smile, but she couldn't describe them to you or tell you their names or even say exactly who they were to her.

She didn't even know what her real name was, lost in the confused muddle of toddler memories, because a nasty fucker named Azazel had kidnapped her and remade her in his image.

"I'm your new father," he'd said with a wicked smile and a sick yellow gleam in his eyes, and she'd started to cry and he slapped her backhand across the face, and after that she didn't cry anymore.

Azazel was the worst kind of thief, who would kill his victims and take the jewels off their bodies, who stole and brainwashed children to do his dirty work. Meg couldn't remember how many of them there

were, all she remembered was that they all had hungry, angry eyes and her new father had been no help in defending herself from her new siblings.

Every day, her memories of her old family, of her old life, got a little bit fuzzier and blurrier until she could barely remember them at all, and that other girl wasn't there anymore and she was just Meg, a filthy teenager with eyes as dark as bruises and no moral compass, who'd never even learned right from wrong.

~o~

When Azazel started pairing his children up and sending them on longer missions, one of her first was with a guy named Tom. They had to steal an ancient gun from Earth-That-Was, one of the few that wasn't broken and choked with rust and grime and still functioned as a gun should.

Tom tested it out by shooting her, and she swore as she lay there bleeding out that someday she'd get him back.

Tom got all the credit and, more importantly, all the payment for the job.

~o~

Meg and Tom were staring down a pair of men in front of an old beaten-up Impala. One was as you'd expect, snarky son of a bitch with a Colt in his hands and a leather jacket on his shoulders. The other was much more interesting, a deadpan guy with unnaturally blue eyes and one of the square silver blades carried by Operatives.

"Wow, dude," the first guy said to Tom, "that's a big gun for such a little dude. Sure you ain't compensating for something?"

Meg despised Tom. Once, he shot her just to test out his gun and she was going to return the favor sooner or later. Azazel hadn't even punished him for that. She hated her family. So she snickered when Tom turned purple and blustered half-formed insults towards the man, who wasn't even listening to him anymore, instead turning towards her with clear interest.

"And what's a pretty lady like you doing with a guy like this?" he asked, completely ignoring the rather large gun she currently had pointed between his eyes.

"You really think I'm pretty, love?" she asked teasingly, jutting her hip to one side instead of answering, because really, what was she doing with that bastard? The answer came easily- following father's orders. But it wasn't that she liked the fucker who'd turned her life into a hurricane of pain and crime and misery.

"'Cause if it's money," the guy continued, overriding her flirtations, "whatever he's paying you, we can pay more."

Tom snorted next to her, "Seriously? You think you can-"

He was silenced rather suddenly when Meg made her choice and unloaded her entire gun into his skull. She kicked the corpse for good measure, because seriously, fuck him, before sliding her gun into the

holster and turning to face the two with a smirk on her lips.

"How much more?"

~O~

Meg never thought she'd have to see her 'father' again.

Of course, she was never that lucky, and that was why there was currently a knife drawing a thin red line across her stomach.

"Hi, daddy," she said with a bloody smile. "Miss me?"

"My wayward daughter," he crooned as the knife dug in between her ribs, and she bit her lip so hard it bled to keep from gasping in pain. "It's been too long. We have so much catching up to do, dearest."

The point of the bloody knife danced up near her eyes, and she tensed, waiting for the world to go dark, but he paused, holding the blade teasingly close. "A little birdie told me you've been traveling with some very interesting people who would fetch a very, very high price."

He leaned in close, too close, close enough that she could smell his breath like smoke and decay and flinched away, wrinkling her nose, his greyish eyes flashing sickly yellow under the flickering warehouse lights. "So why don't you be a good girl and tell me where they are and you can keep your pretty, pretty face."

She spat a glob of blood at his feet and grinned, teeth painted red. "Go fuck yourself, daddy."

He shook his head disapprovingly, clicking his tongue, and then his hideous yellow eyes opened wide with shock as a four-sided silver blade slid out of his throat. Castiel looked down at the gagging and dying man with disgust, and then quickly moved over to her and sliced her bonds with two quick flicks of the knife.

"Are you alright?" he asked urgently, and she stood on shaky legs.

"I'll live," she muttered, before her legs gave out from under her and before she could collapse into the pool of blood and gore on the floor Cas promptly swept her up into a bridal carry and strode towards the door. As unconsciousness threatened, she vaguely made out Sam and Dean rejoining them, bloody and exhilarated, Azazel's guards laying dead on the floor.

She gave a small huff of laughter. "My heroes," she managed before sinking into unconsciousness.

End  
file.